

## Consultations on the Agenda for the Third Ministerial

***U.S. Domestic Consultations:*** The 1998 Annual Report called attention to a Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) solicitation for public comment on the elements for the Third Ministerial agenda. The Administration received nearly one hundred replies to this solicitation, copies of which are available in the USTR reading room. These submissions, along with an extensive process of consultations that extended beyond the private sector advisory committees established pursuant to Section 135 of the Trade Act of 1974, provided the initial views used by U.S. negotiators in setting the U.S. priorities. These views were supplemented in 1999 by three important events. In the spring, the Trade Policy Staff Committee held hearings in Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, and Washington D.C. and solicited public comments about the development of the agenda. The comments filed for these hearings are also available in the USTR reading room. The Department of Agriculture and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative also held hearings around the country to solicit views on the upcoming agriculture negotiations. Cities visited included: Winterhaven, Indianapolis, Austin, Richland, Kearney, Des Moines, Sacramento, Newark, Burlington, Bozeman, Memphis, and Minneapolis. Information from these hearings is available at the USDA website ([www.fas.usda.gov](http://www.fas.usda.gov)). Finally, the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) was requested to provide advice to the U.S. Trade Representative for the market access negotiations. Such advice is required before the United States can engage in negotiations. The ITC published a notice for comment and held hearings to prepare its report to the U.S. Trade Representative.

***Meetings Hosted by the WTO:*** In addition to the discussions held in the General Council, the United States and other WTO Members sought to broaden the debate on the WTO's forward agenda by calling for WTO-sponsored meetings with the NGO community. In the lead up to the Ministerial meeting, there was a high-level meeting on trade and the environment and another on trade and development. Details from these meetings can be found on the USTR website, and the simulcast remains available from the WTO. Finally, on the eve of the Ministerial meeting, the WTO convened a meeting with NGO participants in Seattle. Notwithstanding that the start of this meeting was disrupted as a result of demonstrations, once convened, it provided non-governmental representatives a day-long opportunity to share their views on the full range of pressing matters before the WTO Members.

***High Level Symposium on Trade and the Environment:*** In his speech to the WTO in May 1998, President Clinton called on the WTO "to provide strong direction and new energy to the WTO's environmental efforts in the years to come." As a result of U.S. leadership, the WTO held a High Level Symposium on Trade and Environment on March 15 -16, 1999. A high-level delegation of 22 U.S. officials participated in the symposium, which brought together senior officials from trade and environment ministries, as well as representatives from non-governmental organizations, the business community, academia, and other international organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations, to engage in an open dialogue on the trade and environment relationship. Specifically, the agenda addressed the linkages between trade and environmental policies, the interaction between the trade and environment communities, and the synergies between trade liberalization and sustainable development. This was the first meeting of its kind, and represented to the United States a recognition by many WTO Members of the role that sustainable development must play in the global trading system. Details of the meeting, including submissions and presentations, can be located on the WTO website.

***High Level Symposium on Trade and Development:*** The WTO sponsored the High Level Symposium on Trade and Development on March 17-18, 1999, immediately following the High Level Symposium on Trade and the Environment, to provide informal high-level dialogue among senior officials of WTO Members, senior officials of international organizations, and representatives of non-governmental

organizations from developed and developing countries. The symposium offered the opportunity for an exchange of views on issues such as the development dimension of international trade issues and trade-related concerns of developing countries, including least developed countries, and the role of the WTO in promoting developmental objectives set out in the preamble to the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO.

**NGO Symposium:** Immediately prior to the formal opening of the Third Ministerial meeting, the WTO sponsored a symposium designed to encourage an informal dialogue among WTO Members and NGO representatives on issues likely to affect the international trading system in the next century. Participants included representatives of the more than 700 NGO organizations which had been accredited to the Ministerial Conference. Topics included: “Trade and Development Prospects for the next Twenty Years: The Role of International Trade in Poverty Elimination; Effects of Globalization on Developing Country Economies; Integration of Developing Countries into the Multilateral Trading System” and “Evolving Public Concerns and the Multilateral Trading System: Public Concerns Towards 2020, Trade and Sustainable Development Trade and Technological Developments.” The meeting was simulcast and details are available on the WTO website.